

FRENCH INDO-CHINA

by giving a new lure to town life and by a greater laxity in the law. Anticipating governmental action as a solvent of traditional restraints these men sloughed off their old discipline and lived as they pleased and could from day to day. Thefts were more frequent and delinquents went unpunished in a country which lacked legal means of identification. Insolence grew apace in a people which had always been renowned for their intricate courtesy. This intensified laxness among the Annamite lower classes and earned for the servants of Saigon their present undesirable reputation.

Linguistic barriers and the elimination of the old mandarinat caused the rise of a group of enterprising native interpreters whose ethical standards were no better, only more decorous, than those of the servant class. Outward appearances might be better sustained, but their covert venality knew no bounds. Gratuitous service never characterized Annamite officialdom, but in the old days it was tempered by Confucianist idealism and an *esprit de corps*. Interpreters were particularly noxious in the law courts, yet everywhere it was they who controlled contacts between the people and the administration. Their ill-gotten gains waxed larger through usurious investments which still further contributed to their leech-like grip on the masses, who had for them none of the awed respect that had been lavished upon the old mandarinat.

If the Annamite government had proven no trustworthy bulwark against the Occidental invader, the foreign substitute inspired far more fear than respect. Demoralization and destruction characterized the long and painful adolescence of Annamite individualism. It took time and a mental revolution to buUd up out of the

vacillation between
 disheartening self-doubt and a slavish imitation of the
 West some
 welding of the durable in the old with what was
 adapted to Oriental
 needs in the new. In this the Annamites were
 psychologically ham-
 pered by their own and French race pride, and by a
 congenital tendency
 to imitate rather than to create. It was inevitable that
 they would mould
 what they took over from the West to their own needs
 and distort it
 so grossly that, the tones of the early assimilationists
 must have turned
wretched in their graves.

NATION & MACHINE

The supremacy of the West in Asiatic eyes is symbolized
 by the machine.

It is It is an **inanimate** object, obedient to the
 will of Oriental